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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	Poland	REPORT	
SUBJECT	Ars Polona, Book Import and Export Agency	DATE DISTR.	27 JAN 1958
		NO. PAGES	1
		REFERENCES	RD
DATE OF INFO.			
PLACE & DATE ACQ.			

(p. 9, 17) (ST/1/2) 25X1
 (B-1) 25X1

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

report on the history, organization, plant, personnel and activities of Ars Polona, Polish Book Import and Export Agency.

11 FEB 1958
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 26 FEB 1958
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(Note: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

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HISTORY

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1. Prior to WW II and for a period immediately following the end of the war the import and export of books in Poland was handled by private concerns. From approximately 1947 up to January 1953 the book trade was taken over by a government controlled institution, House of Books (Dom Ksiazki), which was subordinate to the Ministry of Culture and Education (Ministerstwo Kultury i Oswiaty). Within the House of Books, the Bureau of Foreign Trade (Biuro Handlu Zagranicznego) was the section specifically responsible for the export and import of books. In January 1953, the Bureau of Foreign Trade was lifted out of the House of Books completely and from it was created a new organization called the Press and Book, Foreign Trade Central (Centrala Handlu Zagranicznego, Prasa i Ksiazka). The Press and Book was then subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Trade (Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego). In September 1956 the name of the Press and Book was changed to Ars Polona.

SECRET

SECRET

25X1

- 2 -

2. The reason for the name change [redacted] was twofold; one, because the previous name (Prasa i Ksiazka) was too difficult for foreigners to pronounce, and two, because the former name no longer accurately described the activities of the organization. In the early years of its activities Prasa i Ksiazka dealt only with books and periodicals. At the beginning of 1955, however, it expanded its activities to include postal cards, phonograph records, playing cards, stamps, and even antique furniture and other objects d'art. Some of the trade was similar to that conducted by Varimex, but there was apparently no friction or conflict of interests between the two organizations. [redacted] Ars Polona (in 25X1 Polish Sztuka Polska or Polish Art) was the only organization in Poland responsible for the commercial import and export of books. Other institutions exchanged books with foreign countries cost-free.

ORGANIZATION

3. Ars Polona was comprised of the following departments and sections.

a. Chief Director (Dyrektor ^NWaczelny)

Slawomir Schoenborn, supervised the entire organization. He was directly subordinate to the Department for Miscellaneous Articles (Wydzial Artykulow Roznych) in the Ministry of Foreign Trade (Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego - MHZ) (Varimex was also under this department in the Ministry). [redacted] 25X1

SECRET

SECRET

- 3 -

Schoenborn became Director of Ars Polona in January or February 1956. In May 1957 [redacted] Schoenborn was no longer director.

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b. Commercial Director (Dyrektor Handlowy)

O. (full name unknown) Kozminski, directly supervised all the sections and departments which were directly concerned with the export and import of books. Just prior to his departure [redacted]

[redacted] another individual had joined Kozminski in the work [redacted]

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c. General Commercial Department (Dzial Ogolno-Handlowy)

Director, Ryszard Salinger. Including its director this department employed eleven people and was made up of the following sections.

(1) Advertising and Propaganda Section, (Sekcja Reklamy i Prapagandy). Under Zofia Zarankiewicz. It was responsible for advertising in general and for the distribution of catalogues and prospectuses for all of Ars Polona.

(2) Trade Fairs and Exhibitions Section (Seksja Organizacji Wystaw i Targow) under Edward Przybyszewski. It was concerned with the planning and organization of exhibits and fairs including corresponding with exhibit organizers to establish the time and

SECRET

SECRET

- 4 -

place of the fairs and the space available for Ars Polona.

(3) Trade Fair and Exhibitions Accountings Section

(Sekcja Rozliczen Wystaw i Targow) same chief as b above.

It dealt with the accounting for Ars Polona participation in fairs and exhibitions including number and cost of books lost, cost of constructing exhibition booths, transportation of material etc. Its work was very close to that of section b above, but they managed to maintain a division of labor.

(4) Commercial Section (Sekcja Handlowa) under Przybylski (fnu).

It was responsible for the activities of Ars Polona delegates in foreign countries, i.e., how much business was transacted, what difficulties were encountered, and generally whether the exhibit paid off or not. This information was then submitted to the director and to the MHZ in the form of a report. This section also briefed and instructed all delegates going abroad.

d. Planning Department (Dzial Planowania), Director Jakubowski (fnu).

This department was directly responsible to the chief director. It was made up of three individuals in addition to its director and was concerned with the formulation of plans for Ars Polona and following up on their fulfillment.

e. Cadre (Personnel) Department (Dzial Kadr) under Olejniczak (fnu).

In addition to its director this department employed two other individuals

SECRET

SECRET

- 5 -

and was responsible for the usual personnel business including maintaining dossiers on all employees. (After October 1956, employees were told that they could see their dossiers on demand, but few actually took advantage of this offer.)

f. Transportation and Expediting Section (Sekcja Transportu i Ekspedycji) under Janina Dabrowska. This section employed two individuals including its chief and was generally concerned with determining the most efficient means of transporting and expediting shipments of books for Ars Polona.

g. Work and Pay Section (Sekcja Pracy i Placy) also known as the Organization Section (Sekcja Organizacyjna). This was a special section directly responsible to the Chief Director. It employed ^{25X1} two individuals and concerned itself with the legalities and organization of work at Ars Polona. Specifically it was responsible for establishing the number of workers permitted to Ars Polona and their rate of pay, in each case coordinating its quotas with those allowed by the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MHZ).

h. Chief Bookkeepers Department (Dzial Glowny Ksiegowy) under Kazimierz Rosolek. This department was the general accounting office. It employed approximately forty people and was comprised of the following

SECRET

SECRET

- 6 -

branches.

(1) Domestic Accounts Branch (Dzial Rozliczen Krajowych) under Jan Cukier which was responsible for the bookkeeping and finances on domestic accounts. It was divided into many sections.

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[redacted]
[redacted] there was a cashier section, personal accounts section, property section etc.

(2) Foreign Accounts Branch (Dzial Rozliczen Dewizowych) under Mrs. Dziong, (fnu) which was concerned with foreign accounts only. It also had many sections, e.g., capitalist countries, peoples democracies, current accounts etc.

i. Administrative Department (Dzial Administracyjny - Gospodarczy) under Baranowski (fnu) was responsible for all administrative and general housekeeping matters, e.g., supplies, distribution of mail etc. It employed a total of eighteen people and had the following two sections under it in addition to the general administrative section.

(1) General Chancery (Kancelaria Ogolna) actually the general mail room with Miss Kielbasinska (fnu) in charge.

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(2) Typist Pool under the charge of a woman whose name [redacted] could not remember. Although the typists sat and worked in different offices, they all came under the jurisdiction of this office. The

SECRET

SECRET

- 7 -

director of this section kept records on the amount of work done by each typist and submitted these figures to the payroll section. The typists were paid per number of lines typed.

j. Secret Chancery (Kancelaria Tajna) an office directly responsible to the chief director which employed one person, [redacted] [redacted]. This office handled all the classified documents and correspondence. Only the chief director, the commercial director and the personnel director had access to the documents in this office.

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k. Director of the Books and Periodicals Warehouses (Kierownik Magazyn Ksiazek i Czasopism). One person, ^{was} Henryk Choinski, in charge of the Ars Polona books and periodicals warehouses. There were two warehouses, one large on the outskirts of Warsaw and one smaller one in town.

l. Shipping Department for Exports (Wysylkownia Eksportowa) under Boleslaw Szajkowski was the department generally responsible for the actual physical handling of books for export. It employed approximately twenty-six people and was made up of the following sections.

(1) General Section (Sekcja Ogolna) under Brzost, (fnu) which checked documents on books bought in Poland for export, made sure the books were received and stored, then sent the approved documents to the finance section for payment.

SECRET

SECRET

- 8 -

25X1

(2) Registry (Kartoteka), chief

This section functioned as a central records office. On the receipt of orders from the specific country branches, they checked the inventory cards, made the required subtractions and sent the work order to the book-handlers (wybieracze) who filled the order from the stocks of books in the warehouses. The registry also kept records of books coming into the warehouses, including where they were located, how many copies were received and their condition etc.

(3) Invoice Section (Seksja Rafaktur) under Stefania Lewandow⁵ka. This section translated the cost of books into the currency of the country which had ordered them. It made out invoices on the basis of orders received from the country branches. A copy of the invoice was included in the package being sent to the customer; a copy was sent to the customer via air mail; and a third copy was sent to the responsible country branch.

(4) & (5) Packers and Handlers of Books (Pakacze Ksiazek i Wybieracze Ksiaz^zek) the chief of both these sections was Jerzy Zielonka. These sections were responsible for the physical packing, shipping and receiving of books for Ars Polona.

SECRET

SECRET

- 9 -

m. Department for the Import and Export of Books to Capitalist Countries (Dział Importu i Eksportu Ksiazek na Kraje Kapitalistyczne) under Kazimierz Kozera. The following sections were under the department. It employed approximately 32 people.

(1) Section for Exporting Books to Capitalist Countries (Sekcja Eksportu Ksiazek na Kraje Kapitalistyczne) under Czeslaw Bie²gala. This section was responsible for fulfilling the export plan sent down to them from the Ministry of Foreign Trade which spelled out for them in terms of zloties how many books they had to send abroad. In fulfilling the plan they had to check the world market constantly, send out catalogues and prospectuses to various firms and generally generate business. Although this sort of activity was also carried on in the advertising section under the General Trade Department (Para 2, (3) above), it was not felt that this was duplication of effort since the export section corresponded with specific customers. Further, the export section received orders for books directly from the customers and acknowledged the orders by sending the customers comments on the availability of the books. For filling, the actual orders were sent to the Shipping Department for Exports with an approval slip attached from the Export Section. The Export Section often sent sample copies of books to regular

SECRET

SECRET

- 10 -

customers for perusal and possible order. Under the Export Section was also located the Separate Office for the Import and Export of Musical Publications to Capitalist Countries and the Peoples' Democracies (Wydzielona Komorka Eksportu i Importu Wydawnictw Muzycznych na Kraje Kapitaistyczne i Kraje Demokracje Ludowe). This small section imported and exported books on music, sheet music, and musical scores. It dealt with both the capitalist countries and the Bloc countries and was placed where it was only because the director of the Export Section (Biegala) knew something about music.

(2) Section for the Import of Books from Capitalist Countries (Seksja Importu Ksiazek Kraje Kapitaistyczne) under a woman, Mirosława Butkiewicz. This section ordered books from capitalist countries on the basis of catalogues available to them. They ordered books for government institutions only. The Ministry of Foreign Trade established the budgetary limits to the amount Ars Polona could expend on books from capitalist countries. This allotment was presented in the form of varying amounts set up for the various ministers and institutions (e.g. the Academy of Science - PAN). The books imported were actually sent to the House of Books (Dom Ksiazki -, chief and only distributor of books in Poland) which would then pay Ars Polona, send the

SECRET

SECRET

- 11 -

books to whoever had ordered them, and be reimbursed by the recipient.

(3) General Section for Capitalist Countries (Sekcja Ogolna na Kraje Kapitalistyczne) under Maria Gabara. This section was responsible for both the import and export accounts in dealing with capitalist countries. It checked to see that the plan was being met and worked out estimates on the implementation of the plan. A statement on the fulfillment of the plan was sent to the planning section once every 10 days, each month, and quarterly.

n. Department for the Import and Export of Books to the Peoples' Democracies (Dzial Importu i Eksportu Ksiazek Kraje Dem^Kocracje Ludowe) under Helena Ty^{aj}tsch. This department employed approximately 22 people and had the following sections.

(1) Section for the Export of Books to Peoples' Democracies, under Hanna Szczycinska.

(2) Section for the Import of Books from Peoples' Democracies, under Mari^o Woloducka.

(3) General Section, under Alicia Sliwinska (maiden name). The functions of the Peoples' Democracies department differed from the capitalist countries department only in the import of books. Anyone, including ordinary citizens, could order books to be imported from

SECRET

SECRET

- 12 -

Peoples' Democracies. The orders were taken by House of Books (Dom Ksiazki) which periodically sent the accumulated orders to Ars Polona for filling.

o. Department for the Import and Export of Periodicals (Dzial Importu i Eksportu Czasopism) under Stanislaw Frank-Wisniewski. This department employed approximately 30 people and was comprised of the following sections.

- (1) Section for Exporting Periodicals to Capitalist countries, under Maria Wscieklica.
- (2) Section for Importing Periodicals from Capitalist countries, under Teresa Smiga.
- (3) Section for Exporting Periodicals to Peoples' Democracies (Chief unknown).
- (4) Section for Importing Periodicals from Peoples' Democracies (Chief unknown).
- (5) General Section, under Lech Wanago.

In dealing with the Peoples' Democracies in importing and exporting periodicals, Ars Polona only handled the finances. The actual handling of the periodicals and filling of orders was done by the State Colportage Enterprise - "Ruch", (Panstwowe Przedsiębiorstwo Kolportazu, Ruch)

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"Ruch" was the only organization

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SECRET

SECRET

- 13 -

in Poland concerned with the distribution of periodicals inside Poland. It had its own distribution media including kiosks etc. "Ruch" was also involved in the export and import of periodicals to and from capitalist countries. In exporting periodicals to capitalist countries, Ars Polona accepted the orders, corresponded with the customers, and took care of the finances, but the actual shipping was done by "Ruch". In importing periodicals from capitalist countries, "Ruch" accepted orders then sent them to Ars Polona which then checked to make sure that the organization ordering the periodical had sufficient funds allotted for this purpose to cover the order. Only state organizations were allowed to order periodicals from capitalist countries.

p. Department for the Purchase of Books from Publishers (Dzial Zakupu Ksiazek u Wydawcow) under Zdzislaw Jablonski. This department employed approximately 10 people and was comprised of the following sections.

- (1) Section for the Purchase of Books from Book Stores, under Sobolewski, (fmu).
- (2) Bibliography Section, under Wanda Staszko.
- (3) Library Section, under Boleslaw Tawroginski.

In general the Purchasing Department was responsible for purchasing all books required by Ars Polona; deciding which Polish books would be published in foreign language; and deciding which books would be published

SECRET

SECRET

- 14 -

for export only. It coordinated with publishing firms on all details concerned in publishing books chosen for export, i.e., type of paper, number of copies, print, cost etc.

q. Department for Miscellaneous Articles (Dzial Artykulow Roznych), under Jan Sternikowski. This department employed approximately 20 people and had the following section.

(1) Section for Exporting Gramophone Records (Sekcja Eksportu Plyt Gramafonowych) under Mrs. Bitenek, (fnu).

(2) Section for the Import and Export of Postage Stamps (Sekcja Importu i Eksportu Znaczkow Pocztowych) under Kopcewicz, (fnu).

(3) Section for the Export of Miscellaneous Articles (Sekcja Eksportu Artyku ^{low} Roznych) under Jeremi Maruszewski. This section dealt in numismatics, prints and graphic art, postal cards, folk art and antique furniture. All art work sold had to be checked through the Ministry of Culture to make certain it was not considered a national treasure.

(4) General Section (Chief unknown).

PHYSICAL PLANT

4. Ars Polona had partial use of two office buildings and two warehouses. In one five-story building, located on Ul. Foksal 18 in Warsaw, they had one floor, the second. The ground floor of this building contained a recreation hall a chemical goods store and a storeroom for chemicals. The other three stories were used by the Central Sales Office of the Chemical Industry (Centralny

SECRET

SECRET

- 15 -

Zarząd Zbytu Przemysłu Chemicznego) and the Central Administration of Cinematography (Centralny Urząd Kinematografii). On the one floor used by Ars Polona were located what could be called the central offices of the organization, i.e., the Chief Director's office, the Commercial Directors office, Planning, Personnel, etc. About fifteen minutes away, on foot, were located the other offices of Ars Polona. These were on the second and third floors of a five-story building located at Ul. Koszykowa 31. The fourth and fifth floor of this building housed the State Colportage Enterprise "Ruch" (Panstwowe Przedsiębiorstwo Kolportazu, Ruch). The ground floor was occupied by one grocery store and some private dwellings.

5. In addition to the office buildings, Ars Polona had two warehouses, one at Ul. Grzybowska 21 and one in Wlochy Kolo (near) Warszawy (Warsaw).

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the two warehouses usually contained approximately from 20 to 30 million zlotys' worth of books.

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, WAGES, WORK CONDITIONS

6. Ars Polona employed approximately 250 people. The employees were paid on a scale of ten groups. These same ten groups applied to all the so called centrale (sales offices) under the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MHZ). Group 1, the highest, was paid a monthly salary of from 1,000 to 1,200 zlotys. Group 10, the lowest, received approximately 500 zlotys per month. The Chief Director and directors of the large departments were in salary Group 1.

SECRET

SECRET

- 16 -

Group 10 was used for new employees only; after three months employment they were automatically raised to Group 9.

7. In addition to base pay, Ars Polona employees also received Functional Bonuses^z (Dodatki Je^zfykowe). The director of a department used to get 200 zlotys extra each month as a functional bonus. The director of a section received only 100 zlotys monthly. Language bonuses amounted to approximately 90 zlotys per month for the first language, 70 zlotys for the second, and 50 zlotys per month for each additional language. Quite often individuals did not bother declaring more than one language because declaring another might have cost them money in that it would raise them into the bottom part of the next income tax bracket. 25X1

(Dodatki Funkcyjne) and Language Bonuses

[redacted] the organization was considered average as a place to work, i.e., average in pay, benefits and working conditions.

8. There was a Works Council (Rada Zawodowa) at Ars Polona, but it was not an effective group. Notwithstanding Gomulka's promises to the contrary the Works Council had little or nothing to say in the direction of the organization. 25X1 Its sole good point [redacted] was that if the head of the council was a good sort he could help satisfy outstanding grievances for some of the employees.

PARTY MEMBERSHIP

9. Approximately 50 people in Ars Polona belonged to the Polish United Workers (Communist) Party (PZPR). One Olejniczak (fnu) was Secretary of the

SECRET

SECRET

- 17 -

Basic Party Organization (POP). Plenary sessions were held once a month.

The POP Executive met more often as situations or events demanded. The

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POP Executive was composed of five individuals: Olejniczak, the Secretary,

ⁱ
Jeremy Maruszewski, Jerzy Zielonka, Jakubowski, (fnu) and one other

It was not a very active POP. Olejniczak was said to be a member of the Security Police (UB).

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VOLUME AND CHARACTER OF TRADE

10. In 1956 the total export of books to capitalist countries amounted to approximately 500 thousand zlotys.

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admittedly rough estimate of the breakdown of exports to capitalist countries.

Zlotys

110,000

90,000

60,000

50,000

40,000

40,000

30,000

10,000

10,000

10,000

4,000

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it was planned to double the export of books

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SECRET

SECRET

- 18 -

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for 1957. Concerning exports to the Peoples' Democracies, []

[] it amounted to many times that of exports to capitalist countries. He added that very few books were exported to the so-called underdeveloped countries.

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11. [] the import of books from capitalist countries amounted to three times the amount of exports. Most of the books were imported []

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[] and they were almost exclusively technical and scientific books.

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12. Up to the end of 1956, the exchange rate for exporting books to capitalist countries was 12 zlotys to one dollar. After 1956 the rate was changed to 16 zlotys for the dollar. [] this change was made supposedly because the cost of books inside Poland had gone up.

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Presumably then, Ars Polona was willing to absorb the increased cost. For some technical books, special rates were used, e.g., books on mathematics, or other books which were difficult to sell, were often sold at rates amounting to 40 zlotys to one dollar. In addition to using an exchange rate which was somewhat more favorable than the official exchange rate (four zlotys to one dollar), Ars Polona offered its customers in capitalist countries special discount rates. []

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Ars Polona arrived at its export price for a book in the following fashion. For the United States, they would take the cost of the book inside Poland, divide by four, then take one third of the remaining figure to arrive at the dollar price. For example,

12 zlotys = cost of book in Poland;
divided by four = 3;
1/3 of 3, = \$1.00 as the export price.

SECRET

SECRET

- 19 -

Finally, they subtracted the discount established for the country with which they were dealing. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the cost of handling, packing and shipping was never added to the cost of the book nor was there any provision made in the price for the cost of Ars Polona labor.

13. [REDACTED] Ars Polona exported books to capitalist countries at a deficit. When the invoice returned from the customer paid, the Invoice Section (Sekcja Refaktur) made up an accounting on the order, listing the purchase price of the book, the selling price, and the discount given. Then they added [REDACTED] an "aid to export" (Pomoc Eksportowa) figure and sent the invoice on to the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The "aid to export" figure was an amount established in percentages by the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MHZ). It varied for the different countries but usually amounted to from 160 to 200 percent. When the MHZ received the invoice with the "aid to export" calculated on it, it paid the "aid to export" amount into the account of Ars Polona. Thus, in effect, subsidizing the export of books to capitalist countries. This financing procedure was treated as secret. Once when one of the processed invoices was sent to a customer by mistake and he sent it back to Ars Polona, there was quite a furor raised in trying to determine who the culprit was who had made the mistake.

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CENSORSHIP AND CONTROLS

14. Beginning about 1953, the Main Office for the Control of the Press, Publishing, and Public Performances (Główny Urząd Kontroli Prasy, Publikacji i Widowisk - G U K P P i W) had to be informed of the firm name, country of origin

SECRET

SECRET

- 20 -

and titles ordered on every order for Polish books. After 1955, the Control Office gave Ars Polona permission to export all books printed after 1952.

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[] they apparently felt that they had sufficient control of all books printed from 1952 on. []

the Control Office still insisted on seeing books they called "antiquarian" (Antykwareczne) before they were exported. []

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[] all the books published by the Catholic University of Lublin in 1946-47.

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FOREIGN REPRESENTATION

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15.

[] Ars Polona had no permanent representatives abroad. They functioned rather through the commercial counselors in the Polish embassies abroad or dealt directly with the book firms. Often times the commercial counselor would request only that he be sent a copy of important correspondence with firms in the country in which he was stationed. Other matters were taken care of by visits from Ars Polona representatives. At the beginning of 1957, it was decided to have Ars Polona representatives permanently stationed [] Berlin, and Moscow. []

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[] one Jakubowski, (fnu) was already stationed in Moscow and that Kazimierz Kozera will be stationed in Berlin. []

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1. [] Comment: Apropos of the high discount rates given to various countries, it was said around Ars Polona that Jerzy Braun former Commercial Director


SECRET

SECRET

- 21 -

25X1

(Dyrektor Handlowy) for Ars Polona had somehow lined his own pockets with Ars Polona funds because he had established the discount rates

 and they were fantastically high even for Ars Polona.

2.

3.

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